

## **President Zuma calls on South Africans to celebrate Mandela Day**

Parliament - President Jacob Zuma has called on all South Africans to join the world in celebrating Mandela Day on 18 July.

Speaking at his first State of the Nation Address on Wednesday, since being inaugurated as President of the Republic, Mr Zuma said the day should be celebrated to highlight former President Nelson Mandela's legacy.

"Let us wholeheartedly support Mandela Day and encourage the world to join us in this wonderful campaign," said Mr Zuma.

The former president was also present in Parliament.

Mr Mandela turns 91 on 18 July. The day will be celebrated following an international campaign initiated by the Nelson Mandela Foundation and related organisations.

Mr Zuma praised the former president saying: "His values and his example of dedication to the service of humanity is a shining example in today's troubled world.

The day will be celebrated annually and will give people in South Africa and the rest of the world the opportunity to do something good to help others.

"Madiba was politically active for 67 years, and on Mandela Day people all over the world, in the workplace, at home and in schools, will be called upon to spend at least 67 minutes of their time doing something useful within their communities, especially among the less fortunate," he said.

In April, Tim Massey, International Director of 46664 campaign that bears Mr Mandela's Robben Island prison number, said Mandela Day was about creating a movement for positive change and establishing one day to reflect upon, celebrate and make manifest the values that guide Nelson Mandela.

The first democratically elected President of South Africa has been making an imprint on the world for 67 years, beginning in 1942 when he first started to campaign for the human rights of every South African.

According to the foundation, Mr Mandela's life has been an inspiration to the world. To date, the foundation and 46664 campaign has focused mainly on supporting projects in South Africa and sub-Saharan Africa where current needs are greatest, particularly for those infected or affected by HIV and AIDS.

Major international events are planned around Mr Mandela's birthday each year, such as concerts, exhibitions and speeches.

This year, a series of special events will take place in New York involving many of the charity's global ambassadors from the worlds of entertainment, music and film.

The 46664 and the Nelson Mandela Foundation together with the New York City Department of Education will also host a group of middle and high school students in South Africa this month.

The students are expected to visit the offices of Mr Mandela to see the work of the foundation as well as to meet South African students in order to develop a student charter that applies Mr Mandela's ideals to their day-to-day lives and local communities.

All money raised from Mandela Day will support the ongoing work of 46664 and the Nelson Mandela charitable organisations. - *BuaNews*